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I.

Algeria, as prime architect and staunch supporter of a new internal economic order, favors a redistribution of the world's wealth and resources; it has consistently taken a hard line at Law of the Sea conferences. Although Algeria's prominence as self-proclaimed spokesman of the nonaligned and developing states has diminished considerably over the past year, Algiers can be expected to continue its support of positions on law of the sea that give developing nations a role in the exploitation of seabed resources.

Egypt claims a 12 mile territorial sea and, beyond that, would like to create a 6 mile contiguous zone to facilitate fiscal and customs control, enforce immigration and sanitation rules, and better internal security. It does not oppose economic zones, provided their management does not interfere with other legitimate uses of the sea, but claims for itself only a 12 mile fisheries zone concurrent with its territorial sea.

As a key Arab state abutting Israel and two strategic seas, Egypt's chief law of the sea concern is coastal security. The government believes this can be accomplished only if coastal states control the transit of foreign warships through their bordering waters and/or sea passages. Coastal LDCs especially need such powers to offset their limited military potential. Cairo's own priorities center on the Suez Canal and the status of the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Gulf of Aqaba.

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Jordan's three nautical mile claim is intended primarily to preserve Jordanian control over the northeastern end of the Gulf of Aqaba and thus help ensure unimpeded commercial access to Aqaba, Jordan's only commercial port. Jordan's claim also gives it control over the eastern half of the Dead Sea, where the government is beginning to develop a major potash extraction industry.

Libya nationalized the Gulf of Sirte and the Gulf of Bomba during the 1973 Middle East war for "security reasons." Tripoli's major territorial concern today is its continental shelf boundary dispute with Tunisia. Both nations would like to exploit this potentially oil-rich area.

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Iraq's primary concern in any Law of the Sea discussion would be freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf. The Iraqis would like to have the Indian Ocean and the Gulf by extension labelled a "zone of peace", meaning no military bases or installations (at least by non-littoral powers) to be constructed in the region. Specifically, freedom of navigation is Iraq's counter to Iran's plan for collective security arrangements in the Gulf, a plan which would ban USSR and possibly US navies from using the Gulf. Iraq's scheme for open navigation would allow equal access to the Gulf by both the USSR and the US. Iraq depends on the Gulf for transit of the bulk of its oil at present and is concerned with Iran's ambitious naval program and its ability to close the Straits of Hormuz.

Isreal's approach to LOS negotiations are strongly influenced by its hostile relations with its Arab neighbors. Above all the Israelis are concerned about ensuring the right of "non-suspendable innocent passage" through the Gulf of Aqaba, Red Sea, and Bab-el-Mandeb as well as the right of overflight along this same route. The Israelis are particularly worried about including any language in LOS agreements that might allow the Arabs to impinge on these rights. For the same reason they are opposed to compulsory arbitration of maritime disputes between Israel and the Arabs except by special agreement.

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Morocco, a moderate among Arab and African states, generally supports the positions of the Group of 77 on law of the sea issues. Morocco's major concern is the straits issue. It is likely to be a follower rather than a leader on other law of the sea matters.

North Yemen's territorial waters position is based partly on a desire to ensure that its claims to various Red Sea islands are respected, and that a satisfactory deliniation of a median line between itself and Ethiopia eventually is arranged. North Yemeni officials also wish to stake out their claim to offshore areas containing potential petroleum deposits. On virtually all law of the sea issues North Yemen is inclined to follow the lead of the Arab League and larger littoral Arab states on the Red Sea such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Little is known about the rationale for South Yemen's current maritime claims other than its obvious interest in maintaining control of Perim Island which commands the entrance to the Red Sea.

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Oman alone of the Arab states of the Persian Gulf publicly supports Iran's position of "innocent passage" through the Straits of Hormuz. This reflects both Oman's geographic location and the country's close relations with Iran. On LOS topics which the Omanis consider to be of less vital concern -- economic zones and scientific research -- the government is likely to support general third world views.

The remaining gulf states -- Bahrain, the UAE, Qatar, and Kuwait -- generally follow a Saudi lead on international issues. Each is overwhelmingly dependent on transit through the Straits of Hormuz for imports and exports; thus the question of gulf navigation is of primary concern. To date, these states have tended to support a freedom of navigation concept. It is conceivable, however, that some Gulf states would support limiting access by warships of non-littoral states in the future, particularly if this concept were adopted by Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Iraq.

Of interest, but of little real significance, is Sharjah's 12 mile maritime claim. This may well be due to Sharjah's close ties to Iran. In any case, as a member of the UAE, Sharjah is represented by the federal government in international fora.

Saudi Arabia's 12 mile limit is undoubtedly based on long-standing tradition, as are the maritime claims of the smaller gulf states.

Nothing was found on the Syrian position.

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The Sudan is prepared to support general G-77 positions at the approaching LOS conference. This includes the G-77 stand on exploitation of seabed resources. The Sudanese do not feel this runs counter to their own interests in Red Sea mineral exploitation; the area concerned is completely within the continental shelf and Sudan's exclusive zone.

Other issues of special interest to the Sudan are navigation of straits and rights of landlocked states. The government believes straits that connect internal waters with high seas should be subject to rights of innocent passage, while straits connecting high seas should be subject to free passage. Rights of landlocked states particularly concerns the Sudan since three of its neighbors fall into this category and can be expected to seek transit rights across the Sudan.

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The Algerians oppose unregulated exploitation of seabed resources. They believe the industrialized states and multinational corporations would take advantage of the developing countries to deny them a fair share of underwater resources. As a consequence, they strongly support the establishment of an international authority with wide powers over deep seabed mining to ensure these resources are distributed among developing countries.

Egypt favors broad international jurisdiction in the international zone, except over matters directly involving coastal states.

Iraq has made no commitment on deep-sea mining. Nor has the government said much about "creeping jurisdiction" but it does want permission from states claiming expanded coastlines to fish in areas in which Iraqi fishermen traditionally worked prior to demarcation of the continental shelf.

Morocco supports an international authority to manage ocean resources and opposes parallel national exploitation of resources of the deep seabeds, as supported by the industrialized maritime states. Morocco probably would be willing to compromise on this issue, but it is unlikely to break ranks with the Group of 77.

Saudi Arabia appears not to support or to have given much consideration to "creeping jurisdiction." Its main concern is to support the concept of free passage in the Persian Gulf, which it does strongly. The Saudis have resisted considerable pressure from some Gulf neighbors to accept the principle of innocent passage in the Persian Gulf.

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